

Start Programs" (86 Fed. Reg. 68052 (November 30, 2021)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session.

The Senator from Ohio.

#### UKRAINE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today once again to talk about what is happening in Ukraine. This is the 10th time in the 10 weeks of session since before the invasion started that I have come to the floor to talk about the atrocities being committed in Ukraine by this brutal and unprovoked invasion from Russia and to talk about more effective ways for us to help the Ukrainian people.

I just spoke to the Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, Oksana Markarova. She started by thanking me on behalf of the Ukrainian people—really, thanking the American people—and saying that they appreciate all of the help, not just the funding and the weapons but the moral support that the people of Ukraine feel from the people of the United States of America. That made me proud.

She also talked about the desperate need right now to provide Ukrainian soldiers with the heavy weapons they need to confront the new fight in Ukraine—the need to confront Russia as Vladimir Putin continues his brutal campaign to kill Ukrainian citizens, to flatten Ukrainian cities.

Just today, Lviv, which is way over here in western Ukraine, was attacked again. So Russia says they are going to focus over here. Once again, they are lobbing missiles into Lviv. Once again, they have attacked Odesa in the south, hoping, I suppose, to flatten Odesa as well as they have done with Mariupol and kill there somewhere between 20 and 25,000 innocent civilians, according to the latest reports we have.

Ukraine has been an independent and sovereign country since 1991. They are not part of Russia. In 2014, the people of Ukraine made a very conscious choice to turn to the West, to get out from under the Russian thumb altogether. They wanted freedom and democracy, to move away from tyranny and corruption. They wanted to be like us here in America. That is one reason so much of the free world has rallied around Ukraine—because this is about a country that is seeking freedom, free enterprise, the ability to gather freely, free speech.

I was an election observer here in 2014 right after they made this decision, and we saw a fair election, where a President was elected by the people with huge voter turnout. Again, that is one reason we feel this connection to Ukraine, as does the rest of the free world.

Ukraine's armed forces continue to perform well, but as this map shows, the fight is fierce right now. The dark

red here is Ukrainian territory that was taken by Russia back in 2014. This includes Crimea. It includes Donetsk, Luhansk. The lighter red is the Ukrainian territory that Russia has seized during this latest invasion during this war. And the light-blue area is where Ukrainian troops have effectively countered the Russian offensives and pushed Russian forces out of territory.

Ukraine won a decisive battle here, as an example, in Kyiv. You can see where they pushed the Russian forces out.

The Kremlin, at that time, had as a strategic objective, seizing Kyiv, which is the capital of Ukraine, and also other major cities all around the country. They wanted to force the government—the democratically elected government—out to overthrow the government of President Zelenskyy.

Instead, because of effective Ukrainian resistance, Russia has been forced to settle for these more limited objectives, even as they continue to bomb cities all around Ukraine.

They now want to consolidate the Donbas region and create a land bridge from Crimea up to Transnistria. They want to cut off one of the world's greatest exporters—Ukraine—from any access to the city, to make them landlocked so they cannot have an effective economy.

Our goal must be to stop Russia from achieving its invasion goals and push them out of the territory of this free and independent country, Ukraine, our ally. This is a very dangerous point in this battle.

While the Russians have made incremental gains in the east, they have not achieved the decisive breakthrough that they want, thanks to the toughness and tenacity of the Ukrainian forces. But it is a tough fight, and the Ukrainians are outgunned. We must do all we can to keep Russia from a breakthrough until heavier weapons pledged by the United States and other allied nations can reinforce Ukrainian positions—our howitzers, as an example. Artillery is starting to arrive but only starting.

My hope is that by reinforcing Ukrainian positions with these heavier weapons, that will allow Ukraine not just to defend itself but to be able to roll back this Russian invasion and reclaim this territory.

Last week, I was pleased that the Biden administration formerly requested emergency supplemental funding that will provide needed military, humanitarian, and economic aid for Ukraine. This proposal, by the way, includes \$6 billion for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative—a bipartisan initiative I have long spearheaded. Funding for this initiative is used to train, equip, and provide support for the Ukrainian Government and military. It was crucial to helping Ukraine prepare for the current fight, and it is crucial now.

As the President has requested, there is also drawdown authority in this leg-

islation. Now, that is what the President is currently using to provide the howitzers I talked about and other military assistance. There is \$5 billion of additional Presidential drawdown authority in this request.

The existing Presidential drawdown authority has been expended. I just checked with the Ambassador again just before making this speech. She indicates that out of the \$3.3 billion that was in the previous Presidential drawdown authority to provide weapons to Ukraine, there is roughly \$150 million left. In other words, they need this supplemental spending package now. It cannot wait, not at this crucial time in the battle.

I am encouraged by the administration's request for military assistance because I think—assuming we approve it and get this done quickly—it will send a very important message to the world and, most importantly, to Vladimir Putin, that America is in this fight for the long haul.

The humanitarian aid is also desperately needed to complement the remarkable work that is being done in Ukraine by so many great religious and nonprofit groups. Some of you know Samaritan's Purse, as an example.

Last night, Jose Andres, who is the founder of what is called the World Central Kitchen, told me that they have now provided 18 million meals to Ukrainian refugees both in-country and out of country, and they have 12,000 volunteers that have been engaged to do this. They are not asking for money from American taxpayers, but they are providing incredible help, so many of these great groups.

I am also encouraged that the administration heeded our bipartisan calls and appointed a Ukraine military assistance coordinator, LTG Terry Wolff. This followed a letter that I sent with Senators SHAHEEN, WICKER, and DURBIN, with the goal of cutting through the redtape to ensure the right weapons get to Ukraine and they get there quickly.

When I asked Secretary Blinken last week who Lieutenant General Wolff would be reporting to as the coordinator of the military assistance in order to make this whole process work more smoothly and help the Ukrainians more, he was uncertain.

I will state today that I hope that the coordinator, Lieutenant General Wolff, will be reporting directly to the Commander in Chief. Why? Because there are so many Agencies and Departments involved, and the whole idea is to have one person who has the President's ear who is able to get stuff done quickly, without the bureaucracy. And I know President Biden believes that we ought to get this military equipment and other assistance to Ukraine immediately.

In the context of this significant additional funding request for Ukraine to be able to defend itself, it is important to note that they are not just relying on us. We are not the only country providing military assistance to Ukraine.